

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0914

S E C R E T BUENOS AIRES 2830

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR HILL

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, AR (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: FONMIN VIGNES' REACTION TO POSTPONEMENT OF SECRETARY'S TRIP

1. I CALLED ON FONMIN VIGNES LAST EVENING (APRIL 22) TO DISCUSS POSTPONEMENT OF SECRETARY'S TRIP. VIGNES EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR SECRETARY'S LETTER, WHICH HAD BEEN DELIVERED MORNING OF APRIL 22. HE DID NOT TRY TO HIDE HIS DEEP DIS-APPOINTMENT AT POSTPONEMENT. HE NOTED THAT NEWSPAPERS WERE ALREADY SPECULATING THAT POSTPONEMENT HAD SO WEAKENED HIS OWN POSITION THAT HE WOULD NOT LONG BE FOREIGN MINISTER. THIS, HE SAID WAS NOT TRUE. INDEED, HE INSISTED (AND IN THIS HE MAY HAVE BEEN PROTESTING A BIT TOO MUCH), HIS POSITION HAD NEVER BEEN STRONGER. HE INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT HE WOULD PROBABLY BE BUTT OF JOKES FROM CERTAIN OTHER CABINET MINISTERS WHO HAD MAINTAINED ALL ALONG THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD NEVER INTENDED TO VISIT LA AND WOULD NOT COME. THIS, OF COURSE, WAS NOT TRUE, VIGNES SAID, BUT IT WOULD NOW BE DIFFICULT TO CONVINCE THEM THAT IT WAS NOT.

2. VIGNES SAID MRS. PERON HAD LOOKED FORWARD WITH MUCH PLEASURE TO MEETING SECRETARY KISSINGER AND WAS MOST DISAPPOINTED THAT HE UNABLE TO COME.

3. SHIFTING FOCUS, VIGNES SAID THERE NO POINT CRYING OVER WHAT WAS ALREADY DONE. WE MUST NOW LOOK TO FUTURE. IT WAS

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EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAT WE BE ABLE TO SHOW SOME TANGIBLE

AND POSITIVE RESULTS FROM CLOSER US-ARGENTINE RELATIONS WE HAVE ENJOYED FOR PAST TWO YEARS. OTHERWISE, ARGENTINA PEOPLE WOULD DRAW CONCLUSION THAT US NOT INTERESTED IN ARGENTINA. WITHOUT ANY BEATING AROUND THE BUSH, FONMIN RAISED 600 MILLION DOLLAR LOAN PACKAGE AMBASSADOR ORFILA NOW TRYING TO NEGOTIATE WITH PRIVATE BANKS. ANNOUNCEMENT THAT LOAN HAD BEEN EXTENDED WOULD BE BEST POSSIBLE MEANS OF CONVINCING ARGENTINE PEOPLE OF US INTEREST, VIGNES CONCLUDED.

4. IN CLOSING, VIGNES ASKED THAT I INFORM SECRETARY KISSINGER THAT HIS FRIENDSHIP AND AFFECTION WERE AS STRONG AS EVER, AND THAT HE LOOKED FORWARD TO SEEING THE SECRETARY IN WASHINGTON NEXT MONTH.

5. RECOMMENDATION: I WOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT IN ADDITION TO BILATERALS AND HOSTING A LUNCHEON IN VIGNES' HONOR WHILE HE IS IN WASHINGTON NEXT MONTH (AS YOU INDICATED IN TELECON OF APRIL 22 PROBABLY WOULD BE DONE), SECRETARY ALSO BE IN POSITION TO EXTEND TO MRS. PERON, THROUGH VIGNES, INVITATION FROM PRESIDENT FORD TO VISIT US SOMETIME LATER IN THE YEAR, AT A DATE TO BE AGREED UPON LATER. VIGNES WOULD DOUBTLESS BE VERY PLEASED AND HIS POSITION STRENGTHENED IF HE COULD BRING SUCH AN INVITATION HOME WITH HIM FROM WASHINGTON NEXT MONTH. IN MY JUDGEMENT, WE CANNOT LOSE BY EXTENDING SUCH AN INVITATION. EVEN IF MRS. PERON CANNOT ACCEPT THE INVITATION, SHE WILL BE PLEASED BY IT. SHE HAS HER CRITICS, BUT SHE IS THE PRESIDENT AND EVEN ARGENTINES WHO DO NOT LIKE HER WILL SEE AN INVITATION AS A COMPLIMENT TO THEIR COUNTRY. IN SHORT, INVITATION WOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD SMOOTHING THE FEATHERS RUFFLED BY THE POST-PONEMENT.

6. I WILL HAVE OTHER SUGGESTIONS SHORTLY AS TO ACTIONS WE MIGHT TAKE DURING THE NEXT FEW WEEKS TO BOLSTER OUR RELATIONS IN WAKE OF THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE SECRETARY'S TRIP.
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